DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 420 266 HE 031 322

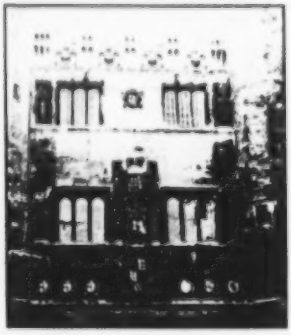
AUTHOR	Velasquez, Patrick
TITLE	Cultural Activities and Campus Involvement.
INSTITUTION	National Council of Educational Opportunity Associations, Washington, DC.; National TRIO Clearinghouse, Washington, DC.; Adjunct ERIC Clearinghouse on Educational Opportunity, Washington, DC.
SPONS AGENCY	Department of Education, Washington, DC.
PUB DATE	1998-00-00
NOTE	25p.
AVAILABLE FROM	National Council of Educational Opportunity Associations, 1025 Vermont Avenue, N.W., Suite 900, Washington DC 20005; phone: 202-347-7430.
PUB TYPE	Reports - Descriptive (141)
EDRS PRICE	MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS	*Academic Persistence; Biculturalism; College Attendance; College Students; Dropout Research; *Enrollment Management; *High Risk Students; Higher Education; *Minority Group Influences; Minority Groups; School Holding Power; Student Alienation; Student Attrition; *Student School Relationship; *Student Subcultures
IDENTIFIERS	Rhode Island College; Southeastern Louisiana University; Southern University New Orleans LA; University of California San Diego

ABSTRACT

This monograph draws upon theories of student involvement and persistence to demonstrate how cultural activities can involve and serve to validate underrepresented groups on campus. A critical element of minority student academic persistence is the extent to which students become integrated into the academic and social systems of their institutions. Such integration need not occur on a campus-wide level; student subcultures may form an effective base from which underrepresented students can create a niche and experience integration and persistence. Particularly salient is the degree to which institutional agents (faculty, staff, and student peers) facilitate the development of the social networks that provide cultural activities and facilitate campus involvement that allow underrepresented and disadvantaged students to bridge the gap between their own culture and the culture of their institutions. Case studies of four institutions' (University of California, San Diego; Southern University at New Orleans, Rhode Island College, and Southeastern Louisiana University) successful attempts to provide cultural activities and facilitate campus involvement for underrepresented students are included in this report. (Contains 41 references.) (MAB)

****
* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *
****

ED 420 266



Cultural Activities and Campus Involvement

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Office of Educational Research and Improvement
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

☑ This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.

☐ Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.

• Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official OERI position or policy.

By Patrick Velasquez, Ph.D.
University of California,
San Diego

Published as a service of the National TRIO Clearinghouse

HE031 322

The National TRIO Clearinghouse, an adjunct ERIC Clearinghouse on Educational Opportunity, collects and disseminates information, applied program materials, resources and research related to TRIO Programs and TRIO students. The Clearinghouse focuses on issues of educational opportunity and access to higher education for low income, first generation participants and students with disabilities. TRIO Clearinghouse services include reference and referrals; a web site at URL: "http://www.trioprograms.org"; publications and bibliographies; presentations; and symposia. The Clearinghouse is housed at the Center for the Study of Opportunity in Higher Education, a program of the National Council of Educational Opportunity Associations. The National TRIO Clearinghouse is funded by a grant from the United States Department of Education.

Acknowledgements

This monograph is dedicated to the members of the underrepresented student organizations at UC, San Diego: African American Student Union (AASU), Asian Pacific Student Alliance (APSA), Kaipigang Pilipino (KP), and Movimiento Estudiantil Chicano de Aztlán (MEChA). Their dedication to preserving and strengthening their respective identities, constructing their own academic achievement and increasing access for their younger brothers and sisters is an inspiration.

The information provided by Zelma Frank from Southern University at New Orleans, Joseph Costa from Rhode Island College, LaVanner S. Brown and Virgima McCrimmon from Southeastern Louisiana University was also invaluable and appreciated.

Cultural Activities and Campus Involvement

By Patrick Velasquez, Ph.D.
University of California, San Diego

FORWARD

Interest in student retention has not waned. If anything it has increased over the years as more and more states have moved to require colleges and universities to report and in some cases, be accountable for improvements in student retention. Nowhere is this movement more strongly felt than among those institutions that are least prepared to meet the many academic and social demands college life imposes. And nowhere is the need for effective action more urgent. "At-risk" students are our future. Their success is our success.

But as many institutions have discovered, improving student retention is no easy matter, especially among "at risk" students. Though real gains are possible, they take time and the investment of considerable faculty and staff energies. This is the case because enduring gains in student retention require institutions to rethink and in some case, substantially change, the way they go about the important task of educating their students. We must not forget that student education is the source of student retention, enhance student learning and the vehicle through which improved retention arises.

But while we have focused on student learning generally, only recently have we given serious attention to education and retention on our campuses. Three new monographs published by the National TRIO Clearinghouse represent a needed step in that direction. These monographs focus on three important areas of institutional action namely, first-year programs, tutoring and campus cultural activities.

The monograph by Lana Muraskin, entitled A Structured Freshman Year for At-Risk Students focuses on the critical first year of college and the need for structured first-year programs which help students make a successful transition to college. It provides a detailed description of the elements of a structured first-year program for "at-risk" students as well as real world examples of programs in four different institutions of higher education. In the monograph entitled Providing Effective Tutorial Services, Joyce Weinsheimer speaks to the character of effective tutoring and its place in an integrated approach to student assistance. Drawing upon examples from several institutions, she details the attributes of effective tutorial services. In so doing, she argues that tutorial services need to work with other areas of the institution to build a campus climate that promotes student success. Patrick Velasquez speaks more directly to issues of campus climate, specifically the role of cultural activities in promoting the inclusion of underrepresented groups on campus. In his monograph Cultural Activities and Campus Involvement, Velasquez draws upon theories of student involvement and persistence and case studies of strategies employed in four divergent higher educational settings to demonstrate how cultural activities can involve and serve to validate under-represented groups on campus. Such involvements, he argues, are part and parcel of student success on campus.

Though there are other issues involved in promoting the success of "at-risk" students in higher education, such as those pertaining to teaching and advising, these monographs will help to advance our thinking about some of the elements of effective programs.

Vincent Tinto
Professor of Education and Sociology
School of Education
Syracuse University

Introduction

On May 2, 1997, the educational field suffered a tremendous loss. The great Latin American educator, Paulo Freire, passed away at the age of seventy-five in Sao Paulo, Brazil. Freire's work on literacy and education among oppressed groups proved profound, in particular his concept of praxis as a principle for emancipatory education (1990). For Freire, praxis described the development of theory connected to reflection and dialogue, followed by the implementation of new practices and subsequently, the continued refinement of theory.

This monograph incorporates the principle of praxis by describing theory and practice on cultural activities and campus involvement in higher education and then providing direction toward concrete programmatic strategies by describing Student Support Services Programs in various institutions.

In order to provide a framework that highlights the critical role of cultural activities and campus involvement, the seminal theory on persistence in higher education will be described. That description will highlight the theoretical dimensions most pertinent to disadvantaged, underrepresented and other students "subcommunities" that face complex transition issues on college campuses (Tinto, 1993). Next, the discussion will connect theories of student persistence to theoretical work that illuminates the experiences of underrepresented students in their adjustment to higher education. Finally, case studies of four programs in divergent college settings will be described. Those descriptions will reveal how the theory becomes practice, with cultural activities and campus involvement as part of a holistic strategy to maximize the development and persistence of SSS participants. The elements critical to the success of those programs will be emphasized.

Theoretical Considerations: The Role of Cultural Activities and Campus Involvement in the Persistence of Students in Higher Education

The discussion begins with a review of Tinto's (1993) seminal theory of student persistence in higher education, followed by additional theoretical perspectives that provide a framework for understanding the contribution of cultural activities and campus involvement to student persistence. In addition, the discussion will be extended further to include theoretical insights on the sociocultural experiences of underrepresented students that affect their experiences in higher education

Tinto's Seminal Theory of Persistence

The prevailing myth regarding postsecondary persistence is that most students who drop out of college do so because of inadequate academic ability and/or performance. According to Tinto however, over two-thirds of students who drop out of postsecondary institutions are in good academic standing at the time of their departure (1993). Tinto identifies a number of variables related to students' postsecondary persistence and integrates them into a model that emphasizes the "institutional experiences" of students and their effect on student persistence. Tinto's theoretical framework is considered the seminal work on postsecondary student persistence (Cabrera, et al., 1992; Mallette and Cabrera, 1991).

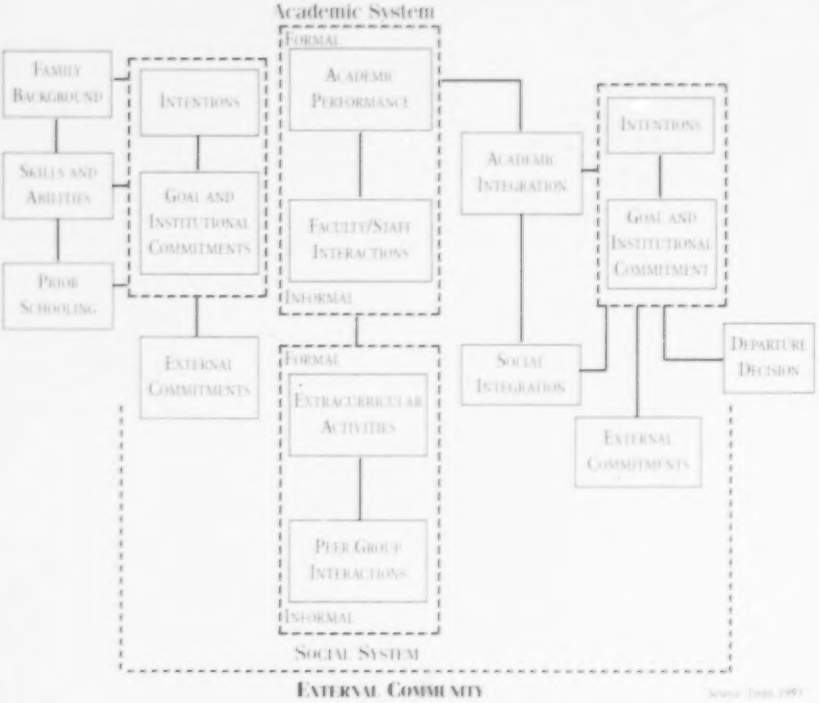
Tinto's work focuses on the structural conditions of colleges and universities, i.e., those with strong, effective structural mechanisms for incorporating students into the intellectual and social life of the institutions experience a lower rate of student departure. Tinto described his model as both longitudinal and interactional; individual student decisions about their persistence can be examined within the period of time during which the student interacts with the intellectual and social life of the institution. According to the Tinto model, each student has a number of pre-college attributes, including family background, skills and abilities, and prior schooling (1993). Those pre-college attributes combine to shape the student's initial goals and commitment to graduation from his/her postsecondary institution.

Students with different pre-college attributes and levels of initial goal/commitment, then interact with the postsecondary environment, a process Tinto describes as "institutional experience". Those experiences occur in two domains, the academic system and social system. The most critical elements within the academic system are academic performance and interaction with faculty and staff. The social system contains two main elements as well, extracurricular activities and peer group interactions. The amounts and qualities of interaction in these two domains of institutional experiences lead directly to academic and social integration, respectively, of the student into the institutional fabric. In turn, both dimensions of campus integration shape the student's reformulated goals and commitments. Finally, those goals and commitments shape the student's departure decision, whether to remain at the institution or leave (see Figure 1).

Thus, Tinto's theory of postsecondary student persistence makes **student integration** in the academic and social systems (both formal and informal) of the institution a critical outcome. Explicit in Tinto's theory is the concept of **congruence**, which strongly affects the quality of student experiences in both academic and social dimensions. Such congruence refers to the degree to which there is a match or "fit" between the "needs, interests, and preferences of the individual and those of the institution". While students who lack sufficient contact with members of the college community may experience isolation, students whose contact with such institutional members leads to a perception of mismatch may feel a strong sense of

Figure 1

TINTO'S LONGITUDINAL MODEL OF INSTITUTIONAL DEPARTURE



incongruence, with subsequent risk of departure. In other words, there is a strong connection between the degree of congruence perceived by students and the extent and quality of their academic and social integration.

Although Tinto's theory provides a theoretical framework for the persistence of college students in general, he also describes a number of principles in the institutional experiences of underrepresented students i.e. students who have not enjoyed equitable access to higher education, such as: students of color, low-income and first-generation college students. According to Tinto, academic and social integration need not occur for students on a campus-wide basis in order to enhance their likelihood of persistence. He recognized that a number of so-called "subcultures" exist among students in most postsecondary institutions and that such subcultures can form an effective base from which underrepresented students can construct their niche and experience integration and persistence.

However, two caveats were identified by Tinto as important to that principle. One concerns the importance of having a critical mass of group members (e.g., African American students, older or returning students, etc.) to ensure the vitality of a campus subculture. Another vital element affecting integration is the degree of marginality experienced and perceived by such groups. Tinto asserts that most post-

secondary institutions have an identifiable culture that defines the campus intellectual and social life. In turn, all groups (e.g., subcultures) on campus maintain a position relative to the mainstream institutional culture, ranging from its center to its periphery. According to Tinto, those subcultures that are closer to the periphery of the mainstream institutional culture will be least effective in achieving integration and, hence, persistence.

The Tinto theoretical model has been well recognized for its efficacy in providing an explanation of the process that leads to postsecondary student decisions regarding persistence. Tinto emphasizes that the experiences a student has after entering the institution have a much greater impact on his/her persistence than do pre-entry characteristics. Those institutional experiences, particularly as they occur with faculty, staff and peers inside and outside the classroom, serve to establish a degree of academic and social integration that directly shapes the student's commitment to remain at the institution. Thus, academic and social integration, respectively, are identified as key components of the persistence process for underrepresented students.

Additional Research on Integration

Stanton-Salazar's Network-Analytic Theory

Tinto's work is complemented by other recent literature on school success, with important implications for postsecondary policy and practice designed to increase student persistence, achievement, and development. Using a network-analytic model to examine the achievement of students of color, Stanton-Salazar focused on the sociocultural organization of groups (both dominant and subordinate) and their subsequent access to institutional resources (1997). Particularly salient to such work is the degree to which "institutional agents" (e.g., faculty, staff, and student peers) facilitate the development of social networks among students of color that enable them to access important resources. Thus, the **information-rich social networks** developed by students can contribute to their overall achievement and development to much the same degree as does academic preparation. These findings also suggests that institutions should facilitate strong, supportive networks between students and institutional agents. Such networks provide students with institutional support through encouragement and direct information about institutional resources and opportunities, thereby contributing significantly to their achievement and development.

Stanton-Salazar's network theory also provides important support for the role of cultural activities and campus involvement in helping students to "decode" the university and develop networks with institutional agents whose funds of knowledge facilitate social (and academic) integration. It is noteworthy that Stanton-Salazar

emphasizes the need for underrepresented students to develop a "bicultural network orientation" that validates and reinforces their respective primary cultures as a strategy toward adjustment to a predominantly white institution. This approach can apply, as well, to first generation and low income students as a whole.

Astin's Principle of Student Involvement

The extensive work of Astin , across three decades, emphasizes the role of involvement in student persistence and development (1991, 1984, 1975). Astin describes involvement as "the amount of physical and psychological energy that the student devotes to the academic experience" (Astin, 1984). He views such involvement as inextricably tied to learning: "Students learn by becoming involved" (1984). As does Tinto, Astin identifies critical roles for both students and the institution in providing a supportive context for student involvement. His principles of involvement provide instructive examples of a critical component of student development, with effects on student persistence. A recent study comparing the respective theories of Astin and Tinto concluded that student involvement with faculty, staff and other students was found to increase students perceptions of institutional and peer support, and subsequently, their academic and social integration (Milem and Berger, 1996).

Summarizing the discussion so far, the persistence of students is largely the result of the degree to which they experience academic and social integration. Those two dimensions of institutional experience are intertwined. Further, the early, sociocultural adjustment of students helps to establish a context for academic integration (Tinto, 1993). Such social integration is particularly important for disadvantaged and underrepresented students, who often perceive an individualistic and competitive culture at institutions where they are in the minority. The concepts of campus involvement and supportive networks with institutional agents, respectively, provide directions toward operationalizing social integration in institutional policy and practice. It now remains to identify the sociocultural experiences undertaken by disadvantaged and underrepresented students as they adjust to the institutional values of college and university campuses.

A Developmental Perspective of Culture

In states such as California, minority students are rapidly becoming a larger portion of both the schools and the labor force. Some demographers and social scientists have described the threat to those states social fabric if this young, growing population, continues to occupy a subordinate position in the social structure (Hayes-Bautista et al., 1988, Persell, 1977). Thus, understanding the factors that can enhance underrepresented students' persistence and development in higher education is critical to improving practice and educational outcomes for disadvantaged students as a whole. This section of the paper explores the variables (and their relationship) that affect the experiences and adjustment of underrepresented students in higher edu-

cation, as a means to understand the situation for all disadvantaged students.

Tinto's construct of postsecondary congruence between student and institution highlights the importance of understanding how both student culture and institutional culture intersect and impact such congruence. Thus, the cultural development process of underrepresented students and the varying institutional cultures of colleges and universities are salient to the degree of congruence and subsequent persistence enjoyed by those students in higher education.

Student Characteristics and Institutional Integration

Darder and others have addressed extensively the process of cultural development among racial and ethnic minority students in the United States (Darder 1991, LaFromboise, et al, 1993; Cortes, et al, 1991). For Darder, such a process features a strong connection between culture and power, which recognizes the degree to which most minorities in the U. S. experienced a level of historic political, social and economic discrimination (Blauner, 1992; Barerra, et al., 1972; Ogbu and Matute-Bianchi, 1986). This dynamic of discrimination and response has created what Darder calls a "sphere of biculturalism", i.e., a number of cultural responses that move between the primary/subordinate cultures of people of color and the secondary/dominant mainstream culture of U. S. society (1991).

For minority groups, Darder describes four major response patterns to discrimination: (1) alienation, in which students internalize the dominant culture at the psychological cost of rejecting their own primary culture; (2) dualism, which features a compartmentalized perception of having two distinct identities, one of which identifies with the primary culture and one of which strives to accept the dominant culture; (3) separatism, in which students strive to remain strictly within the borders of their primary culture while rejecting the dominant culture; and (4) negotiation, which "reflects attempts to mediate, reconcile and integrate the reality of lived experiences in an effort to retain the primary cultural identity and orientation while functioning toward social transformation within the society at large" (Darder, 1991).

The fourth response identified by Darder, negotiation, represents the development of **biculturalism**. Darder went on to describe biculturalism as follows:

> **Biculturalism refers to a process wherein individuals learn to function in two distinct sociocultural environments: their primary culture, and that of the dominant mainstream culture of the society in which they live. It represents the process by which bicultural human beings mediate between the dominant discourse of educational institutions and the realities that they must face as members of subordinate cultures. More specifically, the process of biculturation incorporates the different ways in which bicultural human beings respond to cultural conflicts and the daily struggle with racism and other forms of cultural invasion.**

Darder, as well as LaFromboise, have identified biculturalism as the most functional, adaptive response for student adjustment to mainstream culture and institutions. Additional research with African Americans (Valentine, 1971), American Indians (McFee, 1968), and Chicanos (Buriel, 1994; Ramirez, 1984) attest to the instrumental value of biculturalism in helping minority students achieve psychological comfort and/or institutional achievement. Likewise, the bicultural development process includes a cognitive "product" referred to as ethnic identity with significant implications for the degree to which underrepresented students enact a collective approach to the alleviation of their community's subordinate status (Phinney, 1993, 1990, 1989; Hurtado et al., 1994; Trevino, 1994).

Biculturalism represents a critical means to facilitate the adjustment and persistence of low income, first-generation and minority students in higher education. Moreover, as a developmental process, biculturalism provides a framework for the implementation of cultural activities and campus involvement that leads to higher levels of meaningful social integration for disadvantaged and minority students. Thus, biculturalism becomes not merely an "aesthetic" outcome for cultural appreciation but an effective strategy to facilitate such students' persistence.

Cultural Democracy as Supportive Institutional Conditions — While biculturalism provides important directions for addressing the issue of congruence in higher education, it is important to avoid focusing only on student characteristics. The identification of supportive institutional conditions is also critical to developing strategies that decrease the likelihood of incongruence between disadvantaged students and the colleges or universities they attend.

While biculturalism represents a positive developmental characteristic brought to college by such students, its effects are clearly maximized when the institution constructs supportive, validating conditions. Constructing enabling conditions for students with a wide range of backgrounds in institutions of higher education generally involves a restructuring of values, policies and practices embedded in institutional cultures. Darder and others have referred to such supportive institutional conditions as **cultural democracy** (Darder, 1992, 1991; Ramirez and Castañeda, 1974).

Darder's framework of cultural democracy operationalizes enabling conditions for diverse groups. Those conditions are clearly descriptive of the institutional characteristics necessary to increase the persistence and development of those students in higher education.

From Theory to Practice

The preceding discussion of theoretical frameworks provide a comprehensive, integrated set of insights into the process of persistence for disadvantaged and underrepresented students in higher education. Such theory elaboration indicates that in

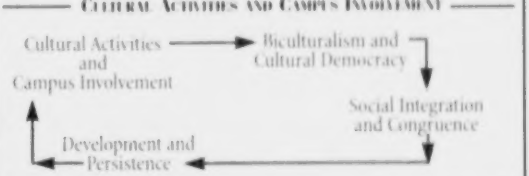
addition to academic integration, the social integration low-income and first generation college student, contributes significantly to their development and persistence.

Despite the considerable efficacy of such comprehensive theories, the question remains: how is social integration operationalized for disadvantaged students in various contexts of higher education? Stanton-Salazar's emphasis on supportive social networks with institutional agents and the development of a bicultural network orientation in the context of underrepresented students, offers important directions toward an answer, as do theories identifying biculturalism and cultural democracy as positive student characteristics and supportive institutional conditions, respectively (1997).

Student Support Services Programs can and do provide cultural activities and facilitate campus involvement that develop the biculturalism of program participants. Student Support Services helps to construct conditions of cultural democracy for participants within the institutions they attend. To the degree that those outcomes are achieved, students' social integration, achievement and subsequent persistence are enhanced (see Figure 2). The connection between these strategies and outcomes is evident in data from the longitudinal study of Student Support Services, which indicated that students' participation in cultural events through SSS is associated with increased grade point averages during their first year of college (Chaney, et al., 1997).

Figure 2

A Developmental Framework of Cultural Activities and Campus Involvement


Cultural Activities and Campus Involvement
Biculturalism and Cultural Democracy
Social Integration and Congruence
Development and Persistence

With particular attention to the current context of higher education described previously, the challenge for Student Support Services staff is to conceptualize and implement strategies for cultural activities and campus involvement that incorporate the developmental processes of cultural responses and identity that mark the experiences of underrepresented, low-income and first-generation college students, respectively. Responding to that challenge requires collaborative efforts among institutional agents, that go beyond superficial representations of culture as artifacts, and that avoid notions of campus involvement that are normative and coercive.

Against such a theoretical, contextual backdrop, four case studies of institutions that provide substantive cultural activities and campus involvement for underrepresented students will be presented.

Case Studies of Cultural Activities and Campus Involvement

The following case studies examine the strategies employed at four divergent settings of higher education. Following their presentation, the elements of their suc-

cessful efforts to provide cultural activities and facilitate campus involvement for underrepresented students will be identified and discussed.

The Learning Center at UC, San Diego

A critical role in student development rests with the Office of Academic Support and Instructional Services (OASIS), the campus learning center at the University of California, San Diego. UCSD is a highly selective, research institution located near the U. S. - Mexico border. Despite the rapidly increasing diversity of the San Diego County population, African Americans, American Indians and Chicanos remain seriously underrepresented at UCSD compared to their percentage of the state's population. Likewise, minorities and disadvantaged students have historically had lower rates of persistence and graduation than other students at UCSD.

OASIS provides two programs designed to construct both academic and social integration among UCSD's disadvantaged students: the Academic Transition Program (ATP) and a federally-funded Student Support Services Program (SSS). Both programs place an emphasis on providing cultural activities and facilitating campus involvement among students served. The ATP focuses on the five student groups underrepresented in UCSD (African Americans, American Indians, Chicanos, Latinos, and Philipinos). The SSS focuses on low-income students, first generation college students and students with disabilities, a high percentage of whom are also from underrepresented groups. The ATP serves first-year freshman, while SSS serves students from their matriculation to UCSD (including freshmen and transfer students) through graduation.

The ATP begins its services by inviting approximately 200 underrepresented freshmen students to a four-week residential transition program, the OASIS Summer Bridge Program. Summer Bridge provides an intensive academic component designed to prepare students to meet the university's expectations for reading, writing, math, science, critical thinking, and study skills. In addition, Summer Bridge provides students a holistic residential component that both reinforces the academic component's activities and facilitates the sociocultural adjustment of new students. A key element of the Summer Bridge residential life component is its Academic Transition Counselors, upper-division undergraduate students who provide individual counseling, facilitate group processing sessions and serve as institutional agents providing information about campus activities and resources. Each Academic Transition Counselor resides in a suite with eight to ten students during Summer Bridge.

The provision of cultural activities and facilitation of campus involvement during Summer Bridge are critical foci for the Academic Transition Counselors. One example is the Cultural Treasures Festival held after the first week of Summer Bridge. The festival provides traditional musical and dance performances by groups from the local African American, Chicano/Latino, and Pilipino communities. The groups also provide commentary linking their cultural performances with the educational

process in higher education, as well a performances that include the direct participation of the students themselves. Later that evening, the Academic Transition Counselors facilitate a meeting with their respective suites. The meeting's content focuses on the Cultural Treasures Festival and its connection to the Summer Bridge Program's credit-bearing course, which addresses issues of equity in higher education. The students' experiences and perceptions related to their traditional culture are validated and reinforced. Thus, students construct a meaningful link between their own authentic cultural experiences and more abstract concepts of equity and critical analysis of their sociopolitical conditions (Darder, 1991).

Summer Bridge also provides a panel discussion between the participating students and representatives of UCSD's ethnic student organizations: African American Student Union (AASU), Asian-Pacific Island Student Alliance (APSA), Kaibigang Pilipino (KP), Movimiento Estudiantil Chicano de Aztlán (MEChA), and Native American Student Alliance (NASA). The discussion focuses on the positive contributions made by ethnic student organizations to both the academic and social integration of students, including social support, cultural education, and academic study groups.

Again, that evening's suite meeting facilitates another connection between the experiences of underrepresented students' efforts toward self-organization and involvement and the elements that contribute to their integration and persistence at the university. The Summer Bridge students are encouraged to consider ethnic student organizations as a source of both cultural activities and campus involvement during their critical first-year adjustment. Likewise, the social support and funds of knowledge provided by ethnic student organizations are emphasized as strategies to minimize feelings of alienation and marginalization.

Following the conclusion of Summer Bridge, the Academic Transition Counselors meet regularly with their students throughout their freshmen year. The meetings continue the provision of study skills, time management and other academic success strategies, as well as processing students' social experiences and cultural adjustment. The Academic Transition Counselors are consistent sources of encouragement and evaluative feedback for students, facilitating students' campus involvement and participation in cultural activities, both on campus and in the local San Diego County Community.

The OASIS Student Support Services Program recruits heavily among low income and first-generation college students who are unable to attend Summer Bridge, as well as among new transfer students from community colleges. The SSS, which serves 200 students annually, facilitates academic and social integration by providing tutoring, counseling, mentoring, and cultural activities.

The SSS mentors play a role similar to that of the OASIS Academic Transition Counselors. Mentors are upper-division undergraduates assigned to SSS students with whom they share the same major field of study (e.g., natural sciences, social sciences, mathematics, etc.). Like the Academic Transition Counselors, the SSS

mentors have completed a ten-week, credit-bearing course (offered through UCSD's Teacher Education Program) that provides a foundation of counseling skills, study strategies and insights on the sociocultural and academic issues faced by UCSD's underrepresented students. These students make up only approximately twenty percent of the student body.

One focus of the mentors' individual sessions with SSS students is their sociocultural transition to UCSD. Students are given information and encouraged to engage in various aspects of extracurricular involvement. Those avenues for campus involvement include various ethnic student organizations, the focus of which may be cultural awareness, career preparation, or community service. Equally important is that the mentors help students to assess their attempts at campus involvement, facilitating their development of the tools to engage in organizational processes and leadership responsibilities. Such development helps the SSS students to construct their niche on campus, often within the context of positive experiences with a "subcommunity".

A major cultural activity implemented by SSS is its community field trips. Periodically, SSS students are provided an opportunity to travel by bus to various locations featuring cultural representations throughout San Diego County. Such locations include museums, cultural organizations, the well-known Chicano Park (featuring an extensive series of murals by local artists) and sources of ethnic cuisine. Because UCSD is located in an upper-income, almost exclusively white community, connecting SSS students to neighborhoods that reflect their cultural and socio-economic backgrounds becomes important to their adjustment and perception of congruence with UCSD.

Evaluations of ATP and SSS in OASIS address both specific programmatic strategies and the more holistic context for underrepresented student development and persistence at UCSD. Assessment of the contribution of ATP to student persistence shows that despite the presence of academic risk factors such as lower academic preparation, low-income and first-generation college student status, ATP students have persistence rates that are consistently higher that non-program underrepresented students, and that compare favorably with overall campus persistence rates (Drevlow and Velásquez, 1997). Likewise, the longitudinal persistence rates of SSSP students are higher than those of non-program low-income and first generation college students at UCSD.

The specific activities designed to facilitate cultural awareness and campus involvement among ATP and SSS students, respectively, are also evaluated. Such process evaluations completed by students indicate very favorable student satisfaction with events such as the ATP's Cultural Treasures Festival and the SSS cultural field trips (Putt and Springer, 1989). The Academic Transition Counselors and SSS mentors also receive praise from students for their knowledge of campus resources and their subsequent ability to facilitate students' campus involvement. Additional process evaluations indicate that students participation in Summer Bridge

increased the development of their ethnic identity, which has been shown to enhance the adjustment and achievement of underrepresented students (Phinney, 1990, 1989; Hurtado, 1994).

The flexible, holistic approach by OASIS to providing developmental services for underrepresented and disadvanteaged students incorporates both the general frameworks of student persistence and knowledge of the cultural responses of underrepresented students in the context of higher education. As a result, their activities designed to facilitate cultural activities and campus involvement go beyond the superficial level of cultural artifacts by connecting students' lived experiences with issues of culture and power (Darder, 1992) in a manner that develops critical thinking, students' construction of knowledge (Tinto, 1996), and students' involving behavior (Kuh, 1993), all of which contribute to their persistence.

Southern University at New Orleans: Student Support Services

Southern University at New Orleans (SUNO) is one of three campuses in a historically Black institutional system of higher education. Its undergraduate population numbers approximately 4,600 students, ninety-nine percent of whom are African American. SUNO is a commuter campus, which presents potential barriers to the facilitation of involvement in campus extracurricular activities.

The Student Support Services Program at SUNO serves 350 students who are low-income and/or first generation college students, along with students with disabilities. SUNO's SSS Program exemplifies a holistic approach which is particularly critical to the students it serves who may face serious issues of relative academic under preparation. Thus, key components of SSS are the projects strong approach to student assessment and its own courses in reading, writing, and math that are conducted by SSS instructors.

SUNO's SSS Program also implements an extensive cultural activities component. One of its objectives is to provide low-income, first generation students access to the many cultural activities available in the city of New Orleans. Such students might otherwise lack the financial resources to attend such events; in addition, students might not otherwise perceive a connection to their experiences and choose to attend.

The SSS Program staff often solicits recommendations for cultural activities from their students. The project staff then selects an activity in the New Orleans area and purchases tickets for students and project staff. In addition to general program publicity for the activities (e.g., posters, flyers, etc.), the connection between cultural and academic development is reinforced in the SSS academic components. The instructors for the SSS reading, writing, and math courses incorporate thematically the essence of the upcoming cultural activity in their lesson plans. Constructing the connection between students' experiences and the cultural activity is a critical

emphasis. In addition, the instructors promote participation in the activities and provide logistic information.

The SSS participants are strongly encouraged to attend at least four cultural events each year. The students have attended a number of events in New Orleans, including stage plays, dinner theaters, jazz fests, a philharmonic performance in connection with Black History Month, and various student performances at other local universities. In addition, the students receive considerable encouragement to attend the cultural activities provided on campus at SUNO.

After the activities, participating students conduct a process evaluation to indicate their level of satisfaction with the event. The project staff also evaluates each activity to determine its positive contribution to students' sociocultural development. The evaluations by students and staff play a critical role in the identification of future cultural activities for SSS participants.

The contribution of cultural activities to the holistic development of SSS participants is evident in their persistence rates at SUNO. Despite the academic risk factors of low-income and first-generation college student that characterize the SSS participants, their graduation rates and academic achievement match those of non-program students at SUNO.

Rhode Island College: Student Support Services

Rhode Island College is a four-year, selective public college located in Providence, with an undergraduate population of approximately 9,000 students. Only four percent of those students come from underrepresented ethnic backgrounds.

The Rhode Island College Student Support Services Program is a full-service program designed to increase student persistence through academic support, cultural activities and extracurricular involvement designed to contribute to a more positive campus climate. The program contributes to participating students' academic integration through extensive tutoring and mentoring services. The Student Support Services Program has a twenty-five year history at Rhode Island College and it enjoys considerable institutional support.

The SSS Program at Rhode Island College also seeks to facilitate students' social integration. A primary strategy used to achieve that objective is to construct a strong working relationship between the SSS Program and the campus' African American, Asian, and Latino student organizations (Harambee, the Asian American Student Organization, and the Latin American Student Organization). Such organizations are representatives of the student subcommunities often found on college and university campuses. So successful is that working relationship that the majority of the respective memberships of those student organizations at Rhode Island College are also participants in the SSS Program. In particular, the organizations' student leaders have consistently been SSS participants as well.

In addition to leadership and general membership roles, the underrepresented stu-

dent organizations of Rhode Island College are key sponsors of frequent cultural activities on campus. With support from SSS, the leadership and membership of the underrepresented students' organizations are largely responsible for identifying and planning cultural activities on campus. Those activities include speakers who address important, contemporary issues related to the experiences and communities of underrepresented students as well as dramatic productions featuring cultural and political themes. The organizations' members clearly develop a sense of ownership which, together with joint publicity by the organizations, SSS and college media increases attendance and participation.

Along with their participation in cultural activities, the SSS participants are frequently appointed to university committees addressing issues of diversity and campus climate. An example of such a committee is the Diversity Committee of the School of Education at Rhode Island College, which is seeking to increase diversity in the institution's teacher training program. The benefits of participation in such "formal" systems of the campus have been shown to be particularly important to students' social integration and persistence (Tinto, 1993). In addition, such involvement contributes to the campus climate by strengthening elements of cultural democracy (Darder, 1992).

Evaluation of the holistic approach to student services by SSS is reflected in the persistence rates of participating students. Despite these students greater academic risk factors the persistence rate of SSS participants is at the same level as that of the overall campus at Rhode Island College.

SSS Project at Southeastern Louisiana University

Southeastern Louisiana University (SLU), in Hammond, LA, is a large, open admission, state university (over 15,000 students) where the vast majority are low income and first generation college students. In addition to academic assistance, counseling and workshops, the SSS project at SLU has placed considerable emphasis on increasing participants' cultural awareness and exposure to diverse cultures through active participation in campus-based cultural activities. It also encourages participants to play leadership roles in campus-wide organizations.

Cultural awareness is fostered in several ways. First, the project is a major participant in the campus-wide cultural events program called Fanfare. SSS participants are repeatedly encouraged to attend Fanfare events, which are free to all students. SSS publishes a weekly list of all campus events to keep participants continually updated. Fanfare activities include concerts, musicals, art exhibitions, dance performances, Gospel music, plays, etc. In the words of one SSS staff member, "If it happens on campus, our students are there." SSS participants evaluate the cultural activities they attend and the information is entered on the campus internet. SSS participants are also encouraged to provide art for the campus' Monthly Art Program, which displays student art, including the art of different cultures. In addition, SSS hosts its own cultural events. For example, SSS holds a cultural luncheon

in which students of different nationalities are encouraged to bring national dishes, and other campus agencies and departments are invited. SSS participants have also formed ad-hoc groups to travel to off-campus plays, concerts or other events, for which costs are supported.

Equally important, SSS staff encourages participants to become active in campus organizations. During orientation, SSS staff describes the organizations, committees, offices and clubs open to students. SSS participants are encouraged to participate in the Student Government Association and become officers. The SSS participants who visit all the booths at the university's Organization and Membership Fair are treated to a dinner. SSS participants were instrumental in forming one of the main political organizations on campus and they play a leadership role in several campus organizations, including the organization for students with disabilities. The staff models the behavior it seeks from students by requiring all staff to serve on committees. Achieving certain levels of student participation in campus cultural events and organizations are explicit SSS goals. SSS staff feels strongly that wide cultural exposure and leadership roles on campus are critical to the educational and social outcomes of college. Despite greater academic risk factors, SSS participants graduate from SLU at the same rates as other SLU students.

Conclusion

The programmatic implementation of the four institutions described above incorporate principles found in the theoretical frameworks of student development and persistence in higher education (Tinto, 1993; Stanton-Salazar, 1997; Pascarella and Terenzini, 1991), as well as theories that address the cultural development of underrepresented and disadvantaged students (Darder, 1991; Phinney, 1990; Phinney and Alipuria, 1990; La Fromboise, et al, 1993). Thus, there are several elements critical to the success of those programs in facilitating social integration and persistence through cultural activities and campus involvement. Such positive elements include:

(1) The programs reviewed feature services derived from a holistic theory of student development that addresses both academic and sociocultural development. At all four institutions, there are connections between cultural activities, campus involvement, and academic activities, designed to develop critical thinking skills. The isolated position of underrepresented, low-income and first-generation college students on many college campuses (Darder, 1992) lends itself to academic and social activities that bridge and assess the relationship between culture, academic achievement, and power. These services offer a holistic approach that effectively incorporates theories of interactive academic and social integration and student persistence (Tinto, 1993). On the other hand, institutional strategies that rigidly compartmentalize academic and social support fail to maximize their students' development and persistence.

(2) The importance of peer support and mentoring in the academic and social development of disadvantaged students is evident in the four programs' services (Tinto, 1993; Nora, et al, 1996; Pascarella and Terenzini, 1991). Upper-division

undergraduate student counselors and mentors and leaders of student organizations, provide funds of critical knowledge to new students as well as bridging, role modeling, encouragement, and evaluative feedback (Stanton-Salazar, 1997).

(3) The four programs clearly provide activities that enable students with diverse backgrounds to integrate into college life. The programs concentrate on activities that validate the primary cultures (and socialization experiences) of underrepresented and disadvantaged students (Darder, 1991). To varying degrees, their activities also facilitate students' comfort with and proficiency in the secondary, dominant culture of society (and the institution). Doing so in a manner that develops their biculturalism and provides a positive, inclusive role for students' respective cultures within their institution helps to construct a perception of students' congruence with the institution, which increases their likelihood of persistence.

In addition, the programs' cultural activities and efforts to facilitate campus involvement seek to enhance the development of students' ethnic identity. Such identity development has been found to be positively associated with the adjustment and achievement of underrepresented students in higher education (Phinney and Alipuria, 1990; Hurtado, 1994; Latino Eligibility Task Force, 1994).

(4) Three of the programs utilize process evaluations to assess their cultural activities; all the programs effectively avoid the inappropriate use of univariate analysis that would compare only participation in cultural activities (or campus involvement) with critical dependent variables such as persistence. Instead, multivariate analysis that seeks to measure the contribution of students' participation in a holistic program of academic and social support services to their persistence are more effective for program assessment. This is particularly true when critical academic risk factors (e.g., precollege preparation, socioeconomic status, and first generation college student status) are considered in the assessment (Robert and Thomson, 1994).

The elements described above represent common threads in the effective service delivery by the four programs highlighted. Each of the programs appears to have performed exceptionally in conceptualizing and implementing cultural activities and campus involvement from a positive, developmental perspective.

The challenging context for such support programs will continue to make such work more urgent. Hopefully, this monograph contributes to the process of praxis and political agency among SSS faculty, staff, and participants in higher education as we seek a fusion of diversity and equitable educational outcomes. ◆

REFERENCES

Arrellano, A. and A. Padilla. 1996. Academic invulnerability among a select group of Latino university students. Hispanic Journal of Behavioral Sciences. 18 (4): 485-507.

Astin, A. W. 1991. Assessment for excellence: The philosophy and practice of assessment and evaluation in higher education. New York: Macmillan.

Astin, A. W. 1984. Student involvement: A developmental theory for higher education. Journal of College Student Personnel. 25: 297-308.

Astin, A. W. 1975. Preventing students from dropping out. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Attinasi, L. 1989. Getting in: Mexican Americans' perceptions of university attendance and the implications for freshman year persistence. Journal of Higher Education. 60 (3): 247-277.

Barrera, M., C. Munoz, and C. Ruelas. 1972. The barrio as an internal colony. Urban Affair Annual Reviews. 6: 465-496.

Blauner, R. 1972. Racial oppression in America. New York: Harper & Row. Buriel, R. 1994. Immigration and education of Mexican Americans. In Hurtado, A. and E. Garcia (Eds.). The educational achievement of Latinos: Barriers and successes. California: University of California Latino Eligibility Study.

Cabrera, A., M. Castaneda, A. Nora, and D. Hengstler. 1992. The convergence between two theories of college persistence. Journal of Higher Education. 63(2): 143-164.

Chaney, B., L. Muraskin, M. Cahalan, and R. Rak. 1997. National study of Student Support Services: Third-year longitudinal study results and program implementation study update. U. S. Department of Education.

Cortes, D., R. Malgady, and L. Rogler. 1991. Acculturation and mental health status among Hispanics: Convergence and new directions for research. American Psychologist. 46(6): 585-597.

Darder, A. 1992. The struggle for cultural democracy in higher education. A paper presented at Making Diversity Work: Institutional and Individual Responsibilities. University of Southern California.

Darder, A. 1991. Culture and power in the classroom: A critical foundation for bicultural education. New York: Bergin & Garvey.

Drevlow, S. and P. Velásquez. 1997. First year retention and academic performance of Summer Bridge 1995 and coparison group of SAA nonparticipants. OASIS Research Synopsis. University of California, San Diego.

Freire, P. 1990 (32nd printing). Pedagogy of the oppressed. New York: Continuum.

Hayes-Bautista, D., W. Schink, and J. Chapa. 1988. The burden of support: Young Latinos in an aging society. Stanford, California: Stanford University Press.

Hurtado, S. 1994. Latino consciousness and academic success. In Hurtado, A. and E. Garcia (Eds.). The educational achievement of Latinos: Barriers and successes. California: University of California Latino Eligibility Study.

Kuh, G. 1993. In their own words: What students learn outside the classroom. American Educational Research Journal 30(2): 277-304.

La Fromboise, T., H. Coleman, and J. Gerton. 1993. Psychological impact of biculturalism: Evidence and theory. Psychological Bulletin. 114(3):395-412.

Latino Eligibility Task Force. 1994. Latino student eligibility and participation in the University of California (Report #3). University of California.

Mallette, B. and A. Cabrera. 1991. Determinants of withdrawal behavior: An exploratory study. Research in Higher Education. 32(2): 179-194.

McFee, M. 1968. The 150% man, a product of Blackfeet acculturation. American Anthropologist. 70: 1096-1103.

Milem, J. & J. Berger. 1996. A modified model of college student persistence: Exploring the relationship between Astin's theory of involvement and Tinto's theory of student departure. Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the Association for the Study of Higher Education. Memphis, Tennessee.

Nora, A., A. Cabrera, L. Hagedorn, and E. Pascarella. 1996. Differential impacts of academic and social experiences on college-related behavioral outcomes across different ethnic and gender groups at four-year institutions. Research in Higher Education. 37 (4): 427-451.

Ogbu, J. and M. Matute-Bianchi. 1986. Understanding sociocultural factors: Knowledge, identity, and school adjustment. In California State Department of Education. Beyond language: Social and cultural factors in schooling language minority students. Los Angeles: California State University Evaluation, Dissemination and Assessment Center.

Pascarella, E. and P. Terenzini. 1991. How college affects students. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Persell, C. 1977. Education and inequality: A theoretical and empirical synthesis. New York: The Free Press.

Phinney, J. 1993. A three-stage model of ethnic identity development in adolescence. In Bernal, M. and G. Knight (Eds.). Ethnic identity: Formation and transmission among Hispanics and other minorities. New York: State University of New York Press.

Phinney, J. 1990. Ethnic identity in adolescents and adults: Review of research. Psychological Bulletin 108(3): 499-514.

Phinney, J. 1989. Stages of ethnic identity in minority group adolescents. Journal of Early Adolescents 9: 34-49.

Phinney, J. and L. Alipuria. 1990. Ethnic identity in older adolescents from four ethnic groups. Journal of Adolescence. 13, 23-38.

Putt, A. and J. Springer. 1989. Policy research: Concepts, methods, and applications. New Jersey: Prentice Hall.

Ramirez, M. 1984. Assessing and understanding biculturalism-multiculturalism in Mexican American adults. In Martinez, J. and R. Mendoza (Eds.). Chicano psychology. New York: Academic Press.

Ramirez, M. and A. Castaneda. 1974. Cultural democracy, biocognitive development, and education. New York: Academic Press.

Robert, E. and G. Thomson. 1994. Learning assistance and the success of underrepresented students at Berkeley. Journal of Developmental Education. 17 (3): 4-14.

Rooney, G. (1985). "Minority students' involvement in minority student organizations: An exploratory study." Journal of College Student Personnel., 430-436.

Stanton-Salazar, R. 1997. A social capital framework for understanding the socialization of racial minority children and youths. Harvard Educational Review. 67(1): 1-40.

Sullivan, A. 1996. Theory integration and theory elaboration using Tinto's model. A paper presented at the American Educational Research Association Annual Meeting. New York.

Tierney, W. 1992. An anthropological analysis of student participation in college. Journal of Higher Education 63: 603-618.

Tinto, V. 1993. Leaving college: Rethinking the causes and cures of student attrition. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Trevino, J. 1994. Participation in Chicano student organizations: A social identity perspective. In Hurtado, A. and E. Garcia (Eds.). The educational achievement of Latinos: Barriers and successes. California: University of California Latino Eligibility Study.

Valentine, C. 1971. Deficit, difference, an bicultural models of Afro-American behavior. Harvard Educational Review. 41, 137-157.

Patrick Velasquez is the Director of the Office of Academic Support and Instructional Services, the campus learning center, at the University of California, San Diego. Patrick also worked with the U.S. Department of Education's Teacher Corps project in the 1980s. He later spent five years as the Executive Director of the Chicano Awareness Center, a multipurpose community education center and delegate agency of the federal Head Start Program. Patrick earned a bachelor's and master's degree in Social Work and Education, respectively, from the University of Nebraska. He also holds a Ph.D. in Higher Education Administration Policy and Student Services from the Claremont Graduate School in Claremont, California.

1025 Vermont Avenue, N.W.
Suite 900
Washington, DC 20005

202/347-7430